

**Wilmette Historical Museum  
Oral History**

Abstract

Interviewee: Robert H. Brady, former fire chief (1952-1985) of Wilmette and longtime resident

Interviewer: Carlyn Whitehand

Date of Interview: January 3, 2002 at 1412 Sheridan Road

General Topics: Brady's life in Wilmette, working in Wilmette in many capacities, time as firechief, and retirement.

**Minutes into  
Interview**

**Topics Discussed**

0 to 5 min.	Family history of Robert Brady. Many members of his family worked for Wilmette. Father was a firefighter for 27 years at the old fire station on Greenbay. Schooling and work experience
5 to 10 min.	Memories growing up. Work as firefighter. Started December 1, 1952. Friday before finished working at Public Works. Worked with many family members at station Changing work schedule
10 to 15 min.	Yule Explosion Fireworks being made, previously had never been reported. Firemen injured. Development of 911 and emergency response 0 → 2121 (emergency) & 2131 (non-emergency) → 911 No paramedics until 1962 and only provided first-aid until 1972.
15 to 20 min.	Expansion and history of the firehouse building. Serving in police line-ups. Mutual assistance to Winnetka, Glenview, and Evanston. Discussion of a recent fire in Glenview.
20 to 25 min.	Retirement Didn't fully retire. Worked as crossing guard for 14 years at Wilmette Ave. & Skokie. Got ill and quit. Worked for 50 years for Wilmette.
25 to 30 min.	Other fire department tasks Saved water plant twice from flooding
30 to 35 min.	Family home being moved and sold due to eminent domain Had a cab business in Wilmette after WWII and sold that company. Worked for a company in the Historical Museum building.

	Discussion about the apartment buildings on Sheridan road and some of the fire and water problems.
35 to 40 min.	Continuation of discussion about apartment buildings on Sheridan road (arsonist and a fire). Working with the Coast Guard. Rescues at the beach. Having to save cats from trees.
40 to end	Condition of Station 2. Discussion of equipment differences through the time he worked as a firefighter.